

SKIT ACTIVITY: GROUP B

Read the following excerpt from the *Mencius*.

Mencius (370–290 B.C.E.)—one of the most famous Confucian scholars. He helped further Confucian teachings, in particular the notion that human beings are basically good.

devoid—completely without

compassion—sympathy, an urge to help

Mencius said, “No man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others.... My reason for saying that no man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others is this. Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of his fellow villagers or friends, not yet because he disliked the cry of the child. From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of the heart of compassion is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of shame is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of courtesy and modesty is not human, and whoever is devoid of the heart of right and wrong is not human.”⁹

1. Circle the statement that best matches the meaning of this excerpt. Check with the teacher once you have decided.
 - Every person has his/her place in society.
 - Duties to one's parents are of utmost importance.
 - Promote those who are most able.
 - Human beings are naturally good.
 - There are proper ways to treat the elderly and the young.
 - When others do not treat you well, think of how you could improve yourself.
2. According to Mencius, what do all human beings have in common?
3. What point is Mencius trying to make with his story about how people would react to a child about to fall into a well?
4. As a group, prepare a presentation of this excerpt. Your presentation should
 - have participation by all group members;
 - clearly portray the meaning behind this excerpt **in a modern-day context** (such as in a classroom, school, or a current event); and
 - be interesting and creative.